



**Ohio Attorney General's Office
Bureau of Criminal Investigation
Investigative Report**



2024-2738

Officer Involved Critical Incident - 345 Lincoln Ave.,
Lancaster, OH 43130 (L)

Investigative Activity: Interview with Robert Kunkler
Involves: Robert Kunkler
Activity Date: 01/15/2025
Activity Location: Near 610 Carroll St., New Lexington, OH
Authoring Agent: SA Aja Chung, #86

Narrative:

On Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at 1639 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Aja Chung (SA Chung) and SA Craig Call (SA Call) interviewed Robert Kunkler (Kunkler). The interview took place inside SA Chung's vehicle at the activity location listed above. The purpose of the interview was to obtain Kunkler's account regarding the use of force incident that occurred inside the Fairfield County Jail (FCJ) on September 7-8, 2024, involving Chad Evangelista (Evangelista). The interview was audio recorded, was saved to the case file, and is attached to this report.

During the course of the interview, agents utilized tactics designed to illicit truthful responses and to test the veracity of information provided. As many of the details of the investigation into the incident were publicly available, it was necessary to utilize alternative tactics (beyond the typical methodology of retaining confidential "holdout" information regarding the incident and then comparing/contrasting witness statements with information that could only be known by those with actual knowledge of the incident). These tactics include developing rapport and potentially providing information known to be erroneous. Therefore, misstatements of facts or evidence in the recorded interview by the interviewing agents are intentional and align with the strategy for the overall investigative plan.

This report only summarizes the information deemed by the author to be of the most relevance to the investigation and does not purport to contain all questions and answers from the interview. Further, this report was placed in a chronology to aid the reader's overall understanding of the information elicited during the interview and may not be reflective of the actual sequencing of questions. It is suggested that the full recording be reviewed to clarify any content or contextual questions regarding the information from the interview.

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Interview:

Kunkler stated that he was employed with the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office for nearly three (3) years before finding another place of employment. Kunkler confirmed he was a corrections officer on September 7, 2024, his badge number was CO 53, and his shift hours were 1600 hours - 0000 hours.

Kunkler stated that he was notified that there was a combative subject, later identified as Evangelista, enroute to FCJ. Upon arrival, Kunkler said he and another deputy escorted Evangelista from the sallyport into pre-booking area. Kunkler described Evangelista's actions/behavior as pushing and/or pulling from their escort control the entire time and saying or repeating words that made no sense. Kunkler further explained that Evangelista appeared inebriated however there was no odor of alcohol, only the indication that he was under the influence of something based off of his actions. Kunkler said they were able to place Evangelista on his stomach inside the pre-booking cell to remove the handcuffs.

Kunkler stated he was working with [REDACTED], still in pre-booking, when they observed Evangelista standing on the half wall inside the cell, hitting the camera with his shoe. According to Kunkler, both he and [REDACTED] were telling Evangelista to get down from the half wall, but Evangelista did not comply. Kunkler stated [REDACTED] stayed at the cell door while he unlocked the door from the central control area. Upon his immediate return to the cell, he observed [REDACTED] spray Evangelista with OC spray when he approached her in an aggressive manner. Kunkler confirmed the OC spray did not have any effect on Evangelista.

Kunkler entered the cell and tried to grab Evangelista, but Evangelista was extremely sweaty, so he slipped out of his grasp. Kunkler explained Evangelista exited the cell and tried to get out of another door that led to the vestibule.

Kunkler went on to explain he grabbed Evangelista around his waist, picked him up and attempted to put/walk Evangelista back into the jail cell. Evangelista was able to close the cell door, leaving Kunkler no other option but to take him to the floor. Kunkler explained that with Evangelista being under the influence of suspected drugs, along with Evangelista's larger size, he felt that was the safest option at that time. Once Evangelista was on the ground, Kunkler advised it took three (3) FCJ personnel to control Evangelista to apply handcuffs.

Once Evangelista was handcuffed, he was placed into a restraint chair. Kunkler said when they tried to place Evangelista in the restraint chair, he was resisting their efforts to secure him to include actively kicking at [REDACTED]. Kunkler explained that

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██████████ administered closed fist strikes to Evangelista's leg to flatten his foot out to secure the ankle straps. Kunkler told agents even after Evangelista was secured in the restraint chair, he tried to get out of the restraints. Kunkler said he observed Evangelista's lip to be bleeding and requested a medic for an evaluation.

Evangelista was wheeled to the shower area to be decontaminated from being sprayed with OC. After decontaminating him, Evangelista was placed inside a cell and checked per protocol. Kunkler advised Evangelista remained in the restraint chair beyond the end of his shift and had no other interaction with him.

Lastly, Kunkler confirmed that he had never came in contact with Evangelista, and he believed his actions were consistent with his training, and within the department's policy and procedure.

The interview concluded at approximately 1657 hours.

References:

None

Attachments:

1. Robert Kunkler audio interview